

### Underpants

This invention relates to a pair of underpants comprising a front part, a back part, a crotch part and two leg holes delimited by the parts, and releasable  
5 connecting means for connecting the crotch part to the front part, said releasable connecting means extending from one leg hole to the other and allowing an opening including the leg holes to be formed in the crotch area.

The purpose of providing an opening in the crotch area is for the wearer to be  
10 able to go to the toilet without having to take the underwear off. This has been proposed for example for a body stocking, as such a garment covers the whole torso it is very troublesome to remove the whole garment when going to the bathroom.

15 An opening in the crotch area is especially desirable for patients with a stoma in cases where the ostomy collection bag is placed outside the underwear.

Underwear with a releasable connecting means in the crotch area is well known. These releasable connecting means are usually Velcro-bands,  
20 buttons and corresponding buttonholes, hooks and eyes, etc. These structures are often placed on a band, often made of a polymer material, and when the band is cut to fit in the underpants the edges may be rough and can cause discomfort and irritation in the groin area.

25 It is an object of the invention to prevent irritation and discomfort originating from rough edges on releasable connecting means on underpants with an opening thus making the underwear more comfortable for the wearer.

30 It is a further object of the invention to make it easier for the wearer to open an opening on a pair of underpants.

### Summary of the invention

The pair of underpants according to the invention comprises a front part, a  
5 back part, a crotch part and two leg holes, and releasable connecting means  
for connecting the crotch part to the front part and allowing an opening to be  
formed in the crotch area, said releasable connecting means extending from  
one leg hole to the other and comprising two parts one overlapping the other  
in the closed condition characterized in that ends of one of the parts of said  
10 releasable connecting means are provided with flexible protection means.

The invention is based on the discovery that by folding the protection means  
provided on the ends of one part of the releasable connecting means around  
the ends of the releasable connecting means of the other part, the discomfort  
15 caused by said ends is minimized thereby making the underpants more  
comfortable.

The flexible protection means are preferably placed on the outer overlapping  
part of the releasable connecting means but may also be provided on the  
20 inner part of the releasable connecting means.

When the flexible protection means are placed on the outer overlapping part  
of the releasable connecting means, the protection means are secured  
between the body of the user and the underpants. When the flexible  
25 protection means are placed on the inner part of the releasable connection  
means the protection means are secured to the outer side of the underwear  
by additional fastening means.

In a preferred embodiment the protection means are in the form of ribbons,  
30 made from a soft material. Each ribbon preferably has a sufficient width to  
cover the edge to be protected.

The ribbons can be made of cotton, nylon or any other material suitable for straps or tapes being relatively unstretchable and having a soft feel.

- 5     The length of the ribbons can vary from 15 to 120 mm, preferably being of a length sufficient to keep the ribbons in place when tucked between the underpants and the body of the wearer.

- 10    In a further preferred embodiment of the invention the ribbon is in the form of a loop, making it easier for persons with poor dexterity to disengage the interconnected releasable connecting means. The loop is preferably of a length of 95 to about 160 mm enabling the loop to hold diameters from around 30 mm to around 50 mm, a size large enough for a person to be able to place one or two fingers in the loop and thereby use it to pull the  
15    connecting means apart.

- For persons with poor dexterity the flexible protection means is preferably placed on the inner part of the releasable connecting means, in order for the protection means to fold out over the edges of the connecting means and be  
20    fastened on the outside of the underpants.

#### Brief description of the drawings

- 25    Figure 1 illustrates a front view of a preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants according to the invention.

Figure 2 illustrates a front view of another preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants according to the invention.

- 30    Figure 3 illustrates a front view of a further preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants according to the invention

Figure 4 illustrates a front view of yet another preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants in open condition according to the invention.

- 5     Figure 5 illustrates a front view of a further preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants according to the invention.

Figure 6 illustrates another preferred embodiment of a pair of underpants in open condition according to the invention.

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Detailed description

- Figure 1 illustrates a pair of underpants with a front part 1, a crotch part 2, two leg holes 3, releasable connecting means 4 one overlapping the other and two flexible protection means 5 attached to the ends 6 of the releasable connecting means 4 in the leg holes 3 of the underpants.
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In figures 2 and 3 the various parts of the pair of underpants are designated with the same reference numbers as in figure 1.

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Figure 2 illustrates another embodiment of the invention comprising two flexible protection means 11 which are in the form of loops. The loops are large enough for accommodating a finger.

- 25     Figure 3 illustrates a further embodiment of the invention comprising two flexible protection means 21 which are folded through the leg holes 3 to the inside of the underpants. When the underpants are in use the flexible protection means 21 are placed between the underpants and the body of the user where the pressure between these two keep the flexible protection means 21 in place.
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Figure 4 illustrates an embodiment corresponding to figure 2, wherein the flexible protection means are located on the front part in an open condition, i.e. where the releasable connecting means 30, 31 are disengaged. A first releasable connecting means 31 is placed on the crotch part 34 of the underpants and a corresponding releasable connecting means 30 is placed on the front part 32 of the underpants. A flexible protection means 33 in the form of a loop is attached to the underwear around the ends of the releasable connecting means 30.

Figure 5 illustrates an embodiment of the invention corresponding to figure 3, wherein the flexible protection means 21 are folded from the inner part of the releasable connecting means to the outside of the underpants.

The flexible protection means can be fastened to the underpants by additional fastening means, e.g. buttons and corresponding button holes, Velcro®, hooks and eyes, snap fastener, etc. The additional protection means can be placed on the underpants, e.g. on the releasable connecting means or on the front part or the crotch part.

Figure 6 illustrates a further embodiment of the invention in an open condition. A first releasable connecting means 30 is placed on the crotch part 32 while a corresponding releasable connecting means 31 is located on the front part 34 of the underpants. A flexible protection means 33 is located on the ends of the releasable connecting means 31 on the crotch part 34. Two parts of a snap fastener 35 are located on the front part 32 on the opposite surface compared to the releasable connecting means 30, and corresponding part of a snap fastener on each flexible protection means 31 on the crotch part 34, for securing the flexible protection means 33 to the underpants.

If desired the crotch part and the back part may be made of in one piece, or the front part and the back part may be made in one piece. Furthermore, if desired all the parts can be made in one piece.

- 5 The underpants can be made of any traditional material for making underpants, e.g. cotton, silk or it can be made of material particularly suitable for use in support garments e.g. for patients with a stoma.